

**Massachusetts  
Division of  
Occupational Safety**



**Massachusetts  
Department of Public  
Safety**



**Trenches are recognized as one of the most hazardous construction conditions for workers and the public.**



**Trench collapses cause dozens of fatalities and hundreds of injuries each year.**

**Prevent Trench/Excavation Collapses!**

**OSHA Highlights:** [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

- ❖ 5 feet and deeper requires protective systems (shoring, sloping, or trench box)
- ❖ Competent person required to provide inspections to trench and protective system
- ❖ Safe means of access/egress every 25 feet when trench is 4 feet or greater
- ❖ Keep excavated material (spoils) more than 2 feet from edge of excavation
- ❖ Identify location of utilities by calling DigSafe 1-888-344-7233

**DPS Highlights:** [www.mass.gov/dps](http://www.mass.gov/dps)

- ❖ A trench permit must be obtained from the municipality prior to making a trench 3 feet or greater (**enforcement on this begins January 1, 2009**)
- ❖ The trench permit must be posted in plain view on the site of the trench
- ❖ All regulated trenches must be either attended, covered, barricaded or backfilled
- ❖ Excavators who use hoisting equipment must be licensed by MA Dept of Public Safety

*Don't forget other potentially fatal hazards exist, including **asphyxiation** due to lack of oxygen in a confined space, inhalation of **toxic fumes**, **drowning**, etc. **Electrocution or explosions** can occur when workers contact underground utilities.*

**The Division of Occupational Safety (DOS) offers a free consultation service designed to help private employers recognize and control safety and health hazards at their worksites, improve their safety and health program, and assist in training employees.**

**Massachusetts Division of Occupational Safety**  
**617-969-7177**  
**[www.mass.gov/dos/consult](http://www.mass.gov/dos/consult)**  
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